

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the sheet of drawings with Fig. 1 by the replacement sheet which is submitted with this paper along with a marked-up copy showing the changes made (removal of reference numeral 7 and corresponding lead line).

REMARKS

By the present amendment, the descriptive sentence referring to Fig. 1 has been amended to delete the reference 7, and accordingly, Fig. 1 has been amended to delete reference 7 and the corresponding lead line.

Further, claims 48 and 50 have been amended to specify that stretched hydrophilic polymer film is a monolayer film. Support for this recitation is found throughout the original specification, in particular the Examples.

Claims 1-18, 21-35, and 42-51 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 8, 22, and 42 are the only independent claims.

In addition to the remarks set forth in the response filed December 27, 2005, Applicants submit the following explanations.

In the Office Action, claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 5,286,418 to Nakamura et al. (“Nakamura”).

As set forth in the response of December 27, 2005, Nakamura discloses hydrophobic polarizer, not hydrophilic, and in addition, Nakamura is completely silent as to any “insubstantial amount” of dimensional change, let alone shrinkage force (this expression was used in the previously cited Hopper reference). Thus, Nakamura does not provide any suggestion or guidance regarding a low shrinkage force.

Further, the dry-stretching process of Nakamura as applied to a hydrophilic polymer film would not have resulted in a polarizer having a low shrinkage force as defined in the present claims.

A Declaration under Rule 1.132 by Mr. Youichirou Sugino, the first-named inventor in the

present application, is submitted to illustrate the ranges of shrinkage force values obtained by a dry-stretching process of a hydrophilic polymer film. As stated in the Declaration, the shrinkage force measurements were taken as in the present specification, i.e., the shrinkage force was measured by (i) heating the polarizer at 80°C for 30 minutes, and (ii) subsequently measuring the shrinkage force of the polarizer alone.

The graph reported in the Declaration shows that dry-stretching of the film having a thickness of 75 microns results in a shrinkage force of about 7 N/cm, while dry-stretching of the film having a thickness of only 40 microns results in a shrinkage force of about 5 N/cm.

Thus, even if, arguendo, a person of the art had found a motivation to modify Nakamura so as to attempt the stretching of hydrophilic polymer films, this would not have resulted in a polarizer according to the present claims because the resulting film would not have had a shrinkage force of at most 4.0 N/cm in an absorption axis direction as defined in the present claims.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, in the Office Action, claims 1-2, 5-6, 21-22, 35, and 42-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 4,818,624 to Downey, Jr. (“Downey”), claims 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Downey, claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Downey in view of US 6,065,457 to Aminaka (“Aminaka”), claims 8-16, 23-28, 42-47, and 50-51 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Downey in view of Aminaka, and claims 17-18 and 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Downey in view of Aminaka and further in view of US 6,361,838 to Miyatake et al. (“Miyatake”).

As set forth in the response of December 27, 2005, Downey does not indicate an “insubstantial amount” of shrinkage but “slight shrinking” for its inventive polarizer samples, as

opposed to “severe shrinking” for the comparative samples, but the samples of Downey consist of a laminate of the polarizing film with a polyester or PET substrate, which strongly suggests that Downey obtains a polarizer having a high shrinkage force.

In addition, the indications of “slight” and “severe” shrinking are vague, i.e., they do not define clear measurement criteria, and further, they concern the visually-observed dimensional variation of the samples, and not the shrinkage force of the polarizer alone as defined in the present invention. Thus, a visually discernible “slight shrinking” of the laminate Downey does not necessarily result or suggest a low shrinkage force, but rather, the teachings of Downey regarding its stretching method strongly suggests a high shrinkage force.

More specifically, the experimental results reported in the Declaration under Rule 1.132 show that the dry-stretching process used by Downey is not conducive to reducing a shrinkage force. Thus, since Downey obtains a “slight shrinking” by incorporating a sylilation treatment and attaching the polarizer to a substrate, the polarizer of Downey taken alone is understood to have a high shrinkage force, and it would not have been clear at all from Downey that modifying the thickness of the polarizer of Downey would provide any benefits regarding the dimensional stability asserted in Downey.

In contrast, the present inventors focused, not on dimensional variation as in Downey, but on the shrinkage force of a polarizer, namely, the shrinkage force of a polarizer consisting essentially of a stretched hydrophilic polymer film, as recited in present claims 1 and 8, the shrinkage force of a polarizer consisting of a single layer film, as recited in present claim 22, and the shrinkage force of a polarizer prepared according to the steps recited in present claim 42. Again, Applicants urge that controlling the shrinkage force of such polarizer alone is completely

different from considering the shrinkage force of a polarizer in a lamination with a support sheet as in Downey. Thus, in the present invention, as recited in present claims 1, 8, 22, and 42, the shrinkage rate of the polarizer is controlled so that the polarizer has a shrinkage force of at most 4.0 N/cm in an absorption axis direction, that shrinkage force being measured on the polarizer itself, not a lamination with a support sheet as in Downey. Also, what is measured is the shrinkage force of the polarizer, not a dimensional variation as in Downey.

In addition, with respect to claims 48-51, it is submitted that Downey considers the dimensional variation of a polarizer after sylilation treatment and attachment to a substrate, so that it is completely silent as to polarizer formed with a dyed and stretched hydrophilic polymer monolayer film, let alone when the polarizer consists of the stretched hydrophilic polymer film. Therefore, for these respective reasons alone, present claims 48-51 are not obvious over Downey.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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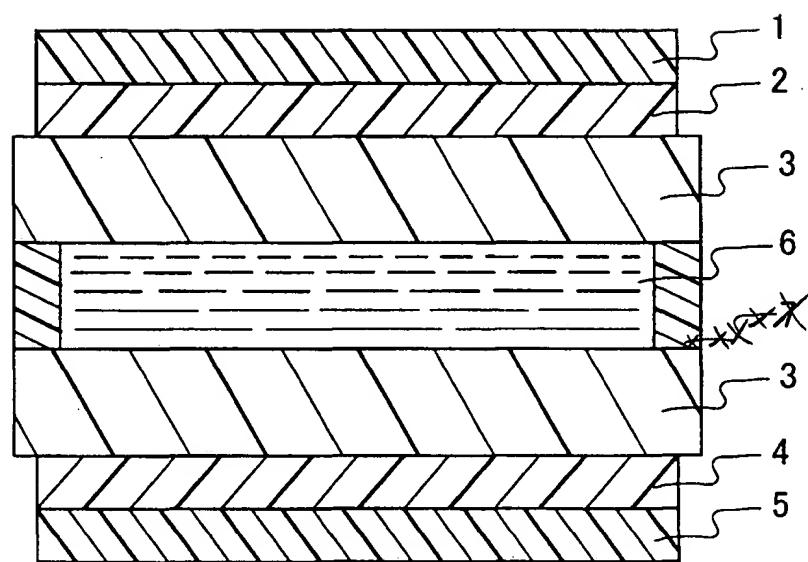


FIG. 1